

## PREACHERS' WIVES

**The Old Loves of Many Noted Ministers of the Gospel.**

**What is a Good Wife?—A Bishop with Four and Eager for a Fifth—Baxter's Wife.**

The lot of a preacher's wife is by no means an easy one. She is second in importance to the preacher himself. Her incomings and out-goings are all noticed, her personal piety, the number of her dresses, the trimmings of her bonnet, the management of her family are all matters that the ladies of the congregation make it a special point to comment upon. Many a poor clergyman has been greater danger of dismissal from the color of his wife's bonnet-strings than from any error of doctrine on his own part. She must be a good mixer abroad and an expert manager at home, know how to live on next to nothing, keep a clean and smiling face, visit the sick and poor, and not neglect the rich and haughty. Her course is continually between Scylla and Charybdis—quicksands on one side, cliffs on the other. Her fate is indeed an unenviable one, and if it is proverbial that preachers' sons turn out bad, why is it not at the door of the poor harassed mother. Many a related of distinguished preachers' wives would form a readable article. The story of

7, while getting off his horse at a

He made no reply, but at the table he took special notice of the servant girl who came to the door. After dinner, when the girls were sitting alone in the parlour, the young lady again entered with the coal scuttle, when Mr. Hall, who in her eyes was scarcely less than a king, remarked: "Betty, do not let me hear you talk of leaving me. I have relied she hoped she did, taking the question merely as an accustomed one from a minister. To her great surprise, Mr. Hall at once replied: "I am not going to leave you. I love Betty, you must love me" and asked her to marry him. Greatly astonished, she ran away and told the family that she believed she was to be married. Her mother, who had once inquired, was surprised and spoke to the preacher on the subject. When the latter declared that such was his intention of marrying Betty, she was so surprised that she almost fainted from the fire. The girls were married and lived happily together. Archbishop Leighton lived a bachelor. When he heard that a young lady of his acquaintance was about to marry, he took an interest in the unmarried ladies of the neighbourhood. One day he received a visit from one of them who was on the verge of despair. She told him of her loneliness and loneliness weighing upon her mind. The archbishop noticed her dilemma, and by kindness and coaxing urged her to unbosom her heart to him. He listened to her with sympathy and revelation from heaven. The revelation he said that she was to be united to the bishop in marriage.

Now, you can imagine the start the coach bishop gave, who wedded to his book and studies. He soon recalled his self possession, and assured her that these revelations were to be despised. As yet the girl was not fully informed of the archbishop's plan, as they had only been revealed to one of the parties. It would be best to wait and see if any similar communication were

not fail to let her know. Thus the innocent female was quietly let down.

Under laws once prevailed in England and Scotland, a woman was not allowed to marry until she was twenty-one. Macaulay says that in Charles II's time "a waiting woman was generally considered as a most suitable help-mate for a parson. Queen Elizabeth's reign was the last in which a girl given what seemed to be a formal sanction to this prejudice by issuing special order that no clergyman should presume to marry a servant girl without the consent of the bishop of the diocese." Such an order as this was, however, easily explained, when one considers that the feudal system prevailed. The sons of affluent gentlemen were proud to serve him at table, and the sisters of the well-born pages esteemed it no degradation to serve in like manner ladies whose degrees were inferior to their own. In the Lord's castles contained female servants whose manners and birth were gentle, and who were never confounded with the dregs of the population. The ladies and masters stood in the place of parents to them and guarded them from disadvantageous marriage connections. In those times it was not considered a disgrace for a nobleman's wife by a deputy (if this discreet neighbor thought she would make a good parson's wife, the matrimonially inclined clergyman would not object) to act as a help-mate and outguard to her beauty, talents or qualifications. The story of the celebrated Hollar's love affairs shows the spirit in which a serving-maid married in those times and how she differed from our countrywomen. A very different man, and was once summoned up to London to preach at St. Paul's. He went to the house of a man named Churchill, who was a great favorite of the king, his good wife, seeing his plight, put him to bed and physicked him with warm teas and sugar until he was in condition to preach. Several years after, he was married to the king's husband, and being thus unable to recom-

and herself to the position of his wife  
the next best thing—brought.

her daughter, and the two were married, and she became the torment of the poor man, and he died of grief, and she died on Sundays—once called upon to rock the baby's cradle.

"Then William Baxter, author of the 'Salut's Rest, was wooed and won by one Margaret Chariton. Says the history of this singular courtship, 'she nothing but a young lady, who, in the year 1690, leap-year could have invented with decorum. She, being a pious and devout young lady, fell in love with him on account of his holiness and fervency in preaching, and therefore she was not to discharge the duties of respect in his chamber. He replied that since he had passed his youth in celibacy, he would be reported maddest in him to marry her, and she would not discharge the part of a husband in all respects. She was of course, listening at the door, and said:

"Dear Mr. Baxter, I protest with a strong and real heart I do not make the tender of myself to you upon any worldly or carnal account, but to have a more perfect conversation with you, and to be able to assist me in the way to heaven, and to keep me steadfast in my perseverance."

"She triumphed, and the good man was led to the altar, and they were both married."

Bishop Thomas was married four times, and not content with this exploit, had the epithet carved on the wedding ring at his fourth marriage:

I'll survive  
I'll make them five.

He used to tell his parishioners how he married so often, and his spouse, while it was of humor, may also possess a grain of common sense, and say to him, "My dear wife die I will take another, and it is my opinion that I shall survive her. Perhaps you don't know the art of getting rid of your wives. I'll tell you, I am called a very good husband and so I am, for I never

contradict them. That circumstance alone is exercised and health and the best medicine to all women. But give them their own way and they will languish and pine and become gross and lethargic for want of the exercise, and you'll soon be quit of them. In an old sermon, as quaint as it is ancient, entitled "The R b Restored," preached by Richard Meggott, afterward dean of Salisbury,